



USAID | **JORDAN**
FROM THE AMERICAN PEOPLE

USAID Jordan Competitiveness Program

Monthly Report - December 2013

Acronyms and Abbreviations

BDC	Business Development Center
BEE	Business Enabling Environment
CDC	Career Development Center
CT	Clean Technology
GI	Gender Integration
GVC	Global Value Chain
HCST	Higher Council for Science and Technology
HLS	Healthcare and Life Sciences
ICT	Information and Communication Technology
IFC	International Finance Corporation
IYF	International Youth Foundation
JCP	Jordan Competitiveness Program
KAFD	King Abdullah Fund for Development
MoPIC	Ministry of Planning and International Cooperation
NAFES	National Fund for Enterprise Support
R&D	Research and Development
SEE	Supportive Enabling Environment
SOW	Scope of Work
SSO	Sector Skills Organization
Y4F	Youth for Future Program

Contents

Key HIGHLIGHTS	1
JCP Work Planning Retreat	1
Cluster Development	2
Clean Tech Cluster.....	2
Healthcare and Life Sciences (HLS)	4
ICT Cluster	4
Research and Development (R&D)	5
Access to Finance	5
Workforce Development.....	6
Business Enabling Environment.....	7
Administration and Management	7
Gender Integration.....	8
Communication	9
USAID JCP Calendar for January 2014	10

Key Highlights

- Four successful focus group sessions were conducted by the **Clean Tech (CT)** Cluster. The sessions brought together 42 attendees, 80% of which were from the private sector. The sessions were organized around the cluster's target sub-sectors: Renewable Energy, Energy Efficiency, Water Management and Waste Management.
- Four successful focus group sessions were conducted by the **Healthcare and Life Sciences (HLS)** Cluster. The sessions brought together 37 attendees from both the private and public sectors. The sessions were organized around the target sub-sectors: Medical Tourism, Medical Education, Pharmaceuticals and Supporting Services.
- The Access to Finance Component started a mapping of the current financing environment for the three targeted JCP clusters.
- A work planning retreat was held from December 9-11 in Aqaba that provided an opportunity for JCP staff to begin planning for the project's first year of activities and aligning those activities with the project's draft performance monitoring plan.
- The project's R&D specialist joined the JCP team this month and began mapping JCP sector related research conducted by Jordanian universities and research institutions.
- The first Workforce Development Component local staff started this month. In preparation for work planning, the team focused on stakeholder mapping in the areas of career development centers (CDCs) and entrepreneurship training.

JCP Work Planning Retreat

A work planning retreat was held from December 9-11 in Aqaba that provided an opportunity for JCP staff to begin planning for the project's first year of activities and aligning those activities with the project's draft performance monitoring plan.

Attendees participated in a variety of team building activities to increase their understanding of factors that lead to successful or unsuccessful collaboration. The team also discussed the current situation in Jordan (in relation to the targeted sectors and components) and how it has changed in the past two years since DAI's original proposal for JCP was developed. The team also discussed the challenges and opportunities facing each sector and component.



JCP staff members during the planning retreat.

During the second day of the retreat, JCP staff reviewed the deliverables and activities detailed in the original JCP proposal workplan. Using the JCP proposal workplan as a starting point, each team then began recommending activity deletions, additions and modifications as well as sequencing and prioritization.

Attendees also participated in cross-component / sector working group sessions, organized around JCP's three target clusters: Information and Communication Technology, Clean Technology, and Healthcare and Life Sciences. The sessions encouraged the sector and component teams to discuss synergies and areas for collaboration. This session was particularly valuable as for many participants this was the first opportunity for the component teams to meet with the sector teams and discuss, concretely, how the components would work in the coming year to support the work of the sector teams.



JCP staff members during the planning retreat.

Retreat participants were also introduced to DAI's approach to performance monitoring and the initial draft performance monitoring plan that was included in the JCP proposal. Based on recommended indicator selection criteria, the teams began to narrow the number of indicators that will be included in JCP's final PMP submission.

The retreat's final session, which took place after the team returned to Amman, covered two cross-cutting issues that need to be integrated into every component – gender and the environment. Three concrete gender related outcomes of the retreat were: 1) the formation of a gender committee to help lead the project in integrating gender into its sector and component activities; 2) the planning of a sector targeted gender study; and, 3) the inclusion of gender updates in JCP's regular monthly reports.

Although the retreat itself was a success, it was hard to maintain momentum in the face of the worst winter storm Jordan had seen in 60 years. During the first week after the storm, most staff were stranded at home and were unable to reach the office or were prevented from participating in the next round of cross team meetings that were needed to complete the first draft of the workplan by the punishing daily traffic chaos that ensued in Amman in the aftermath of the storm. This unanticipated weather event, combined with the late December holidays, has set back the work planning process by about two weeks.

Cluster Development

Clean Tech Cluster

Four successful focus group sessions were conducted by the **Clean Tech (CT)** Cluster. The sessions brought together 42 attendees, 80% of which were from the private sector. The sessions were organized around the cluster's target sub-sectors: Renewable Energy, Energy Efficiency, Water Management and Waste Management. As a result of the focus group sessions, 12 new opportunities were added to the sector's list of possible priority projects and 24 opportunities were adjusted based on focus group feedback. The team followed up on each focus group session by sending a briefing document to all attendees detailing the participants' input and the team's proposed next steps.

Raouf Dabbas, Advisor to Minister of Environment, who attended one of the focus groups sessions said *“The ‘political will’ will be the key enabler for our program. We need to prepare ourselves well but then go after the political will to get it done.”*

“At the current caps on the grid, we will only be able to support 80 MW of renewables, hence a grid cap adjustment is needed,” said Hanna Zaghloul, CEO of Kwar Energy.

“The insights collected on financing will be something that IFC should look into,” said Nesreen Abu Sleiman from the International Finance Corporation (IFC).

The focus groups were an important step in the team’s preparation for the upcoming implementation labs. The focus groups helped the team: 1) update its baseline data and assumptions; 2) update the list of potential opportunities; 3) complete the competitiveness analysis for each sub-sector; and, 4) assess the investment requirements for each opportunity.

Other significant tasks in December included participating in the JCP Year 1 work planning retreat (detailed above); working with the Access to Finance Component leader on identifying relevant finance sector stakeholders for each CT opportunity; and, holding initial discussions with the ICT association, Int@j, on possible ICT linkages with CT opportunities.

Milestones for next month:

- Prepare and deliver tailored presentations to at least four Ministers along with their senior management teams to generate greater buy-in from the public sector.
- Finalize invitations, logistical arrangements and technical material for the Innovation Accelerators.
- Carry out two Innovation Accelerators (two in January and another two in February).
- Continue engaging with stakeholders, including the rescheduling of a trip to Irbid that was delayed due to December’s storm.



Clean Tech focus group participants.



Clean Tech focus group participants.

Healthcare and Life Sciences (HLS)

Four successful focus group sessions were conducted by the **Healthcare and Life Sciences (HLS)** Cluster. The sessions brought together 37 attendees from both the private and public sectors. The sessions were organized around the target sub-sectors: Medical Tourism, Medical Education, Pharmaceuticals and Supporting Services. As a result of the focus group sessions, 30 opportunities were identified and 11 opportunities were adjusted based on focus group feedback. The team followed up on each focus group session by sending a briefing document to all attendees detailing the participants' input and the team's proposed next steps.



HLC focus group participants.

The feedback from the focus group sessions was universally positive. Some of the most memorable quotes from the sessions that are closely aligned with the team's initial thinking about the direction of some initial sector opportunities included:

"Many qualified healthcare professionals go overseas after some years due to the better pay. How can the national education system help retain that talent?"

"We are not graduating a sufficient number of female nurses to meet the patient demand. How can the education system design incentives for women to choose nursing?"

Milestones for next month:

- Prepare and deliver tailored presentations to at least four Ministers along with their senior management teams to generate greater buy-in from the public sector.
- Finalize invitations, logistical arrangements and technical material for the Innovation Accelerators.
- Carry out two Innovation Accelerators (two in January and another two in February).
- Continue engaging with stakeholders through meetings and working sessions.



HLC focus group participants.

ICT Cluster

The ICT team worked on finalizing a subcontract scope of work (SOW) for Duke University to map the Global Value Chain (GVC) of the ICT Cluster with a focus on and full analysis of five subsectors: ICT solutions for healthcare, ICT solutions for the energy sector, e-Education, Arabic content and hardware design.

The ICT team also continued the search for a permanent sector leader. Interviews for this position will continue after the holidays.

Milestones for next month:

- A three-person team from Duke University will arrive the second week of January to initiate the work on an ICT GVC analysis.
- Continue holding focus groups and meeting with ICT related stakeholders in collaboration with Int@j.
- Identify and submit for USAID approval an ICT Sector leader.

Research and Development (R&D)

The Cluster Component's Research and Development Specialist, Ms. Rana Zaid, joined the JCP team on December 1. The R&D Specialist began by meeting with all the cluster and component leads to identify areas of collaboration and by reviewing existing literature related to R&D and commercialization and updating the project's R&D related data for all three JCP target clusters. The team also met with the proposed National Innovation Center (HCST and NAFES). All of these were important steps in preparing for the Year 1 work planning session.

Following the work planning retreat, the team started mapping of JCP-related research conducted by Jordanian Universities & Research institutions. The team also began preparing for meetings (to be scheduled after the holidays) with research and development funding agencies, Jordanian universities, and research centers to introduce JCP and identify possible opportunities for R&D collaboration.

Milestones for next month:

- Organize meetings with research and development funding agencies, Jordanian universities, and research centers (to enable an R&D supply-side analysis).
- Completion of the literature review on R&D and Commercialization.
- Coordinating with the sector teams on mapping of the JCP sector related research.
- Organizing a visit for JCP staff to neighboring Oasis 500 during their next "boot camp" training; as an ice-breaker to help JCP and Oasis 500 establish linkages between our two offices.

Access to Finance

Access to Finance consultant Mr. Omar Asfour joined the JCP team on December 4 as the interim Access to Finance Component Leader. Mr. Asfour participated in six of the eight CT and HLS sector focus groups and worked with each cluster team on mapping the current financing environment for the clusters and on identifying the financing needs for selected opportunities and matching them against the aforementioned financing environment research. All of these steps were important in helping to prepare for the Year 1 work planning retreat.

Milestones for next month:

- Organize additional stakeholder meetings (and reschedule those delayed from December).
- Identify key financing challenges faced by target sector participants.

- Initiate work on the recently requested (by USAID) MENA II Assessment.

Workforce Development

The first local Workforce Development Component team member, Ms. Khitam Farah, started this month. In preparation for work planning, the team focused on stakeholder mapping in the areas of career development centers (CDCs) and entrepreneurship training as well as reviewing the National Employment Strategy, a key point of reference for the team. The key stakeholder meetings included:

- **AL Quds Community College**, which is one of the most progressive private colleges that is known for developing curricula and training programs to meet market needs. The college has recently launched a business incubator for entrepreneurship that may prove to be a useful model for replication.
- **Int@j**, which is the business association for the ICT sector. Two meetings were held with Int@j to discuss its proposed Sector Skills Organization (SSO) (the ICT sector's version of a Center of Excellence). Working with the ICT sector to establish such a center is a JCP contract requirement.
- **Al Huson Career Development Center** is one of the Balqa Applied University Colleges. Its CDC was established in 2007 through seed funding by the USAID Jordan Economic Development Program and is one of the only such centers from that time to have proven sustainable.
- **King Abdullah II Fund for Development (KAJD)**. KAJD has 25 career development offices at public and private universities throughout the country and is currently developing a career counseling strategy. KAJD is interested in partnering with JCP to help strengthen its career development offices.
- **Business Development Center (BDC)**. BDC was established in 2004 as a non-profit organization working on local economic development, entrepreneurship and youth employability.
- **The Youth for Future Program (Y4F)** is a USAID Jordan funded program implemented by the International Youth Foundation (IYF). Y4F has piloted community based career guidance centers to reach youth no longer in school. A visit to one such office is scheduled for January.

All of these meetings helped the team develop its approach for Year 1 work planning, especially in the areas of entrepreneurship training and supporting career guidance. The two most significant conclusions from December's stakeholder meetings were: 1) it makes more sense for JCP to build on and strengthen existing career development centers (and offices) rather than develop and promote its own CDC model; and, 2) with a few notable exceptions (including Al Quds and Al Huson, mentioned above), there is a systemic lack of post-graduation placement data in Jordan. Without such data, it is impossible to assess the efficacy of CDCs, centers of excellence or (more broadly) new curricula. Both issues will be addressed in the team's section of the work plan.

Milestones for next month:

- The second WFD team member will join JCP in January and begin working with the sector teams on private sector – academic sector linkages.
- Co-sponsor a donors meeting for stakeholders interesting in supporting the ICT SSO.

- Develop a career development assessment tool, visit additional career development centers, create a business model for a successful CDC and start to define a package of support to help strengthen existing CDCs.
- Reschedule stakeholder meetings in the area of entrepreneurship training that were delayed due to December's weather.

Business Enabling Environment

During the month of December the SEE team started to engage with the Government of Jordan and donor counterparts to begin developing a comprehensive workplan for the component. Meetings were held with the head of the Policy and Strategy Directorate within MoPIC, the Companies Controller at the Ministry of Industry, Trade and Supply, the Deputy Director of the Jordan Investment Board, the task leader for a credit bureau within the Central Bank of Jordan as well as the IFC.

It was discovered that there has been some progress with some of the laws highlighted in the original RfP for JCP, including, but not limited to, the new Investment Law, the Bankruptcy Law, the development of a Credit Bureau as well as the Secured Lending Law. The December stakeholder meetings helped the team devise an approach for going forward with some of the regulatory reforms envisioned under JCP.

The SEE component also participated in the Clean Tech and Healthcare and Life Sciences cluster focus groups. All of the focus group meetings reinforced the fact that some of the most important steps required for cluster growth will be in the regulatory arena.

Milestones for next month:

- On-board three local SEE component team members.
- Participate in the upcoming Innovation Accelerators and Implementation Labs where it is expected that the team will gain a better idea about the cluster specific regulatory hurdles that are currently preventing cluster growth.

Administration and Management

During December the administration team continued to be led by an interim Director of Operations. The interim director focused on staff training, especially the new Procurement Manager and Procurement Officer, in DAI procurement procedures. The team also completed interviews for the remaining open administrative positions (IT System Administrator, Translator and Driver). Finally, the team completed a draft of the project's grants manual and submitted it to USAID for review and comment. Other significant administrative activities and achievements during the month included:

- **Receipt of MoPIC letter.** The receipt of a letter from the Ministry of Planning and International Cooperation linking DAI to the JCP program removed a key administrative constraint. The project can now pursue opening its own project bank accounts.
- **Information Technology Procurement.** The shipment of the project's server and other IT related equipment was sent from the US and it is expected to arrive in Jordan soon. Upon arrival,

a DAI home office IT Specialist will help configure a local area network for the team and set up all remaining IT functions needed by the JCP team.

- **Local Procurement.** Local RfPs were released for the design of the project's website, for a local ISP provider and for health insurance for local staff.

Milestones for next month:

- The completion of an Environmental Monitoring and Mitigation Plan.
- The formal submission for USAID approval of the JCP grants manual.
- The on-boarding of the last key operations team staff: Director of Operations (1/19), Finance Manager (1/2), Grants Manager (1/15) and Accountant (1/15). With this last group, the build up of the core JCP administration team will be complete.

Gender Integration

During December JCP formed a committee consisting of three members (Senior Workforce Development Specialist, Clean Tech Cluster Lead and Business Enabling Environment Specialist) who will work to ensure that gender considerations are fully integrated throughout all JCP implemented activities. As a first step the committee reviewed JCP commitments in the original JCP proposal and prepared a presentation for the entire JCP project team summarizing the different components' commitments toward gender and how these might be integrated into the JCP Year 1 Work Plan.

In early December, a GI committee representative, the JCP COP and visiting work planning facilitation consultant Anne Simmons (DAI's Global Practice Leader for gender) attended a meeting with USAID Jordan's point person on gender and the JCP's Contract Officer's Representative. The team committed in this meeting to develop and submit a Gender Action Plan showing how it will integrate gender into program activities.

Finally, in December the CT and HLS Clusters started estimating the percent and number of jobs that will be created for women in each cluster and sub-cluster by year. Throughout all the cluster focus groups held during December, women's participation was promoted and ensured to the maximum extent possible.

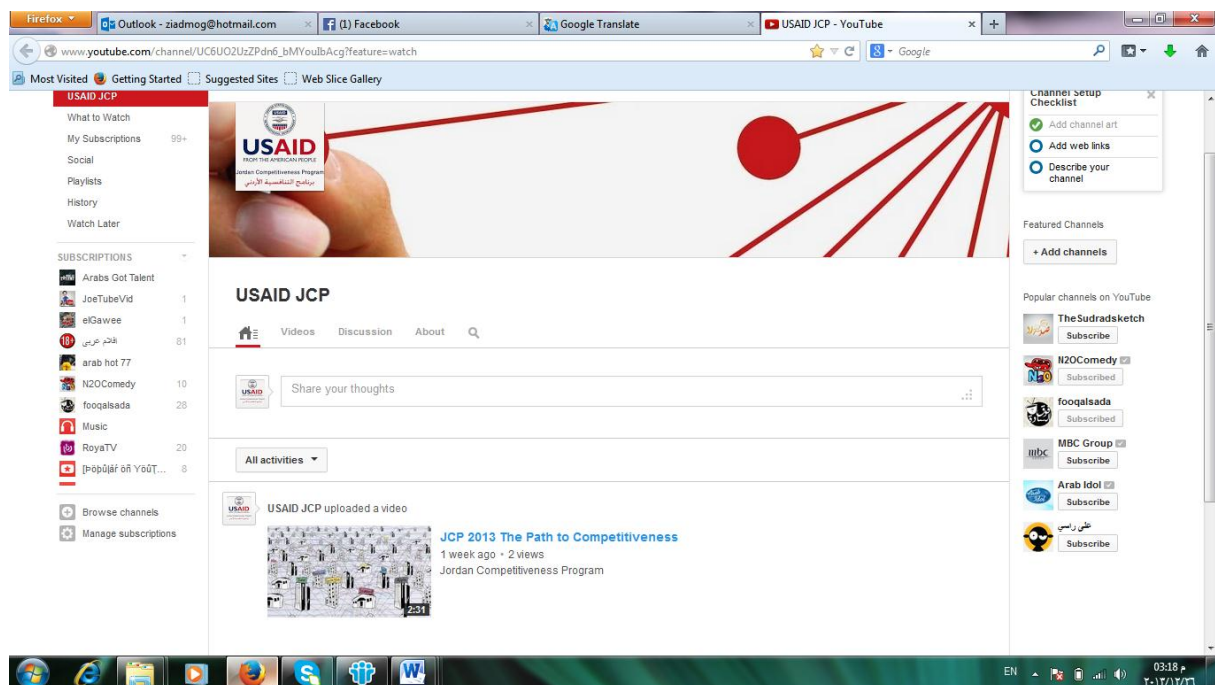
Milestones for next month:

- Meet with different components and clusters to discuss their planned activities regarding gender integration for Year 1 Work Plan.
- Meet with key stakeholders, such as the Woman Micro Fund and the Women Professional and Business Forum, among others.
- Coordinate meetings with other USAID funded programs that have links with JCP clusters and components to learn more about who is doing what with respect to gender integration so as to avoid duplication of efforts and seek out possible areas of collaboration.

Communication

During December, the Communications Officer continued to lay the foundation for JCP's future communications needs. The most significant tasks and milestones included:

- **Project Website.** The team worked on developing a structure for the future JCP website that meets the needs of all components. In addition, an RfP for the design and construction of the website was written and an advertisement for the RfP was published in a local newspaper.
- **Fact Sheets.** The team translated five fact sheets for the project into Arabic. The fact sheets included overviews of JCP, the Clean Tech Cluster, the Healthcare and Life Sciences Cluster, the ICT Cluster and the Workforce Development Component.
- **Facebook.** The Facebook page was updated regularly, and there is good level of interactive from people who are following the page. The number of people who like the page has reached almost 500 people.
- **YouTube.** A YouTube channel for JCP was developed. The channel currently includes one video ("The Path to Competitiveness") that was developed for the launch of JCP. The link to the channel is: http://www.youtube.com/channel/UC6UO2UzZPdn6_bMYoulbAcg?feature=watch



JCP page on Youtube channel

Milestones for next month:

- Development of content for the anticipated website.
- Developing a content plan for the Facebook page.

USAID JCP Calendar for January 2014

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
			1	2 Meeting with US Ambassador	3	4
5 Minister Meetings (5 th – 9 th) Dates: TBD	6 Presentation at JCP with Samer Asfour & staff from Royal Hashemite Court	7	8	9	10	11
12 Int@j SSO Donors Meeting Date: TBD	13 Meeting with Prime Minister Date: TBD	14	15	16	17	18
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
26 Cluster Team Delivery Labs start	27 Cluster Team Delivery Labs	28 Cluster Team Delivery Labs	29 Cluster Team Delivery Labs	30 Cluster Team Delivery Labs	31	